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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Monday, September 23, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE WITH VARIATIONS." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Put fruit and cake together and you have a combination almost everyone likes. One of the best of all the many cake-and-fruit desserts is upside-down cake. This is the cake that goes in the oven with fruit underneath but comes to the table with the fruit on top.

You are probably familiar with upside-down cake. Most good cooks make it now and then. But perhaps you haven't stopped to think how many advantages it has, or perhaps you don't know of the many different ways to make it.

Here are a few reasons why upside-down cake is such a good dessert. To begin with, it is both delicious and good-looking, so delicious and good-looking it deserves a place at your best company dinner. At the same time, it is so simple to make and inexpensive it is good for family meals. It needs no careful or complicated mixing and no special utensils. You can bake it in your plain, everyday, thick frying-pan. In fact, that's such a favorite way to make it many cooks call it "skillet cake" instead of upside-down cake.

Upside-down cake takes only a half or three-quarters of an hour to bake in a moderate or very moderate oven.

And one of the best things about upside-down cake is that it never needs to get monotonous. You can make it with many different fruits and with several different cake mixtures.

All in all, it's a dessert to depend on.

The fruit you use for upside-down cake may be the apples or peaches you have on hand this season; or, canned fruit like cherries, peaches, apricots, or pineapple slices. Dried fruits are good also. Dried apricots are especially delicious used this way. So are raisins. And so is a mixture of different dried fruits.

As for the cake, it can be one of the economical cake mixtures like one-egg cake, or gingerbread, or water sponge cake. These inexpensive cakes taste best when they are hot and fresh, just out of the oven. So hot upside-down cake comes in handy at this season when the weather is colder and the family's appetite inclines toward hot desserts. The fruit mixture on top of the cake makes enough of a sauce in itself. But if you're having company, or want to be extra dressy, you can serve the cake with whipped cream, or hard sauce. Or you can serve it with a scoop of vanilla ice cream alongside. The hot and cold make a nice contrast.

Some of the best recipes for upside-down cake come from different State experiment stations, where food scientists have been working on good ways to use the fruits of those particular regions.

Here's a recipe for peach upside-down cake from Michigan. This recipe makes a 19-inch cake and serves 8. It takes about half an hour to bake in a moderate oven. And you cook it in a 9-inch heavy skillet.

Here's how you make this Michigan upside-down cake with fresh peaches. (You can also make it of canned peaches if you use half as much brown sugar.) First, melt 4 tablespoons of butter in your skillet; then add two-thirds cup of brown sugar. Keep stirring the butter and sugar until the sugar melts. Now take the skillet from the fire and on top of the butter and sugar arrange a layer of overlapping peach slices. On top of the peaches put halves of walnuts or pecans here and there. Now let the skillet stand while you mix up a one-egg cake.

You may use your own favorite recipe for one-egg cake. But here's the one from Michigan. Sift together one and a half cups of flour---2 and a half teaspoons of baking powder----and a fourth teaspoon of salt. Let me repeat those dry ingredients: One and a half cups flour....2 and a half teaspoons baking powder.... one-fourth teaspoon of salt. In another bowl, cream together 4 tablespoons of fat and three-fourths cup of sugar. (4 tablespoons fat....three-fourths cup of sugar.) Add one egg and beat. Now add those sifted dry ingredients alternately with a half cup of milk and a little vanilla, beating as you add. Pour this cake batter over the peaches in the skillet. Put the skillet in an oven registering 375 degrees Fahrenheit to bake about half an hour. As soon as the cake is done, turn it out upside down on a plate and serve it.

From the Washington State Experiment Station comes a recipe for apple upside-down cake. Washington scientists say Jonathan apples are a good choice. And here's how they say to arrange the apples. Spread a thick coating of butter or other fat on the bottom and sides of a heavy pan or baking tin. Then core, pare and slice apples in thin rings. Spread the apple rings in a single overlapping layer on the bottom of the baking dish. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Then add another layer of apples with more sugar and cinnamon. Pour one-egg cake batter or gingerbread batter over the apples. Bake in a very moderate oven, registering 300 to 325 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes.

There are 2 recipes from State scientists. Now here's an idea from a good cook in Iowa. She says either canned pineapple or peaches are good fruits to combine with water sponge cake in making upside-down cake. (Some people call this "skillet sponge cake".) And a California cook suggests dried fruit with either gingerbread or one-egg cake. Then from Wisconsin comes a recipe for cranberry upside-down cake. You cook the cranberries first with sugar until they are really preserves. But there. That recipe can wait until later in the fall.

Just remember at any time of the year you can use fruit you have on hand for this delicious, good-looking, easy and economical upside-down dessert.

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